

MEMORANDUM TO: Mayor and City Council

VIA: David B. Humpton, City Manager *DH*

FROM: Frederick J. Felton, Assistant City Manager *FF*

DATE: November 9, 2006

SUBJECT: Sprinkler Systems for Existing Multi-Family Dwellings

City Manager Humpton and I have had a series of conversations with the Fire Marshall and other staff from Planning and Code Administration concerning the lack of automated fire suppression sprinkler systems in our aging multi-family housing stock.

The City has required the installation of sprinklers in new multi-family dwellings for over 25 years, and we now require sprinklers for all residential construction; however, we have thousands of apartments built in the 1960's and 70's that are not equipped with fire suppression systems.

We expect that a significant number of our aging apartments could be renovated or converted to condominiums in the relatively near future. Our Fire Marshall has indicated that it is fairly easy and economical to retrofit an existing multi-family dwelling with sprinklers when they are vacant. Accordingly, staff is recommending that the Mayor and City Council consider adopting an amendment to the Building Code that would require the installation of automated sprinkler systems whenever an existing multi-family dwelling containing at least four (4) dwelling units should become vacant.

Staff is in the process of drafting an ordinance of this nature, and we will be seeking guidance on this issue during the November 20, 2006 Mayor and City Council meeting.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter, please let me know.